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## **CHAFEE CELEBRATES ENACTMENT OF BROWNFIELDS BILL** *Tours Brownfield Site in Providence with Federal, State and Local Officials*

**PROVIDENCE, RI** -- U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee today joined the Trust for Public Land as well as federal, state and local officials at the abandoned Louttit Laundry Building in Providence to celebrate the enactment of the Brownfields Revitalization and Environmental Restoration Act.

"Enactment of this brownfields bill is a victory for the environment, the President, and for communities across America," Chafee said.

The original Senate bill was authored and introduced by Senator Chafee – along with Senators Bob Smith (R-NH), Harry Reid (D-NV), and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) – on February 15, 2001. It authorizes \$250 million per year, over fiscal years 2002-2006, for the assessment and cleanup of brownfields sites. The measure also provides legal protections for innocent parties involved in redeveloping brownfields sites.

"Today, hundreds of pieces of otherwise valuable property are now sitting idle because of brownfield liability concerns," noted Chafee, a former mayor. "These unsightly, undeveloped properties provide nothing to a city's tax rolls, while acting as a breeding ground for crime, mischief and contamination. America's mayors know that brownfields redevelopment will carry a host of indirect benefits: city tax rolls will grow; schools will be invigorated; new homes will be built; green spaces will flourish; and community character will be restored."

Chafee toured the site with Alan Front, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at the Trust for Public Land (TPL), who commended Chafee for his tireless work on this important environmental cleanup initiative. "Senator Chafee's brownfields bill provides real incentive to recycle these sites instead of just throwing them away. In Providence and around the country, we have seen how much reclaimed brownfields can do to spur local economies, green up urban landscapes and stem the tide of sprawl. Thanks to Senator Chafee's leadership in steering this bill over countless legislative hurdles, these landscapes of despair truly will be turned into places of hopes."

The Trust for Public Land is a national conservation organization dedicated to conserving land for people to enjoy as parks and open space. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 1.4 million acres nationwide, including nearly 100,000 in New England.

Chafee was also joined by Providence Mayor Buddy Cianci, RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Director Jan Reitsma, RI Economic Development (RIEDC) Director Tom Schumpert, EPA Brownfields Coordinator Lynne Jennings, representatives from RI Association of Realtors, and the West Broadway Neighborhood Association.

The Louttit Laundry Building has been vacant since 1987. In 1999, following a number of failed attempts to renovate the former dry cleaning plant, the City of Providence foreclosed on the property. The building's interior was destroyed by fire in May 2001 – further complicating efforts to redevelop the site. In December 1999, the RIDEM performed a base line survey followed by a Phase II site assessment that found extensive tetrachloroethylene (TCE) and oil contamination at the site. Remediation and redevelopment for the site is expected to cost at least \$1.5 million.

During a bill signing ceremony on January 11<sup>th</sup> at the Millennium Corporate Center in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, which was built on a former brownfield site, President Bush singled out Chafee for his efforts to reform the nation's brownfields program. Hailing the legislation as “the best of Washington,” Bush called it good public policy and an example of what can happen “when people decide to cooperate, not bicker, when people put national interests ahead of political interests.”

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